

From: Dr. Larry Keller
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Settlement

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Professor of Public Administration, a citizen of the United States and a consumer of computers, I find the settlement with Microsoft (MS) troublesome. The company is nearly a classic example of a predatory company whose main mission is domination. They prefer to set "standards" of their own choosing rather than abide by standards that are set by appropriate bodies. Their products are often inferior to others, and in some cases, such as Apple computer, they even own part of the company.

They not only dominate OS, they control the office market. In fact, they also own part of Corel, a distant second in that market. I can't imagine being a company competing on applications with those who work with the Company that controls the OS. That by definition is not fair competition; in fact, the numbers of sales of applications office products clearly demonstrate it is not competition at all.

They bundle their software so that consumers cannot easily use more powerful third party products without considerable knowledge. Defaults often trigger warnings and similar statements that a casual user of computers, by far the dominant user, would interpret as making it impossible to use any product but MS for a particular purpose. They greatly impede progress in software.

In addition, the company also sells hardware. With the immense cash flow MS enjoys they can pick and choose what hardware they will make next. As with software, I have no doubts that MS would use that ability to punish whoever opposed them.

Finally, they sell OEM versions of their products at differential prices. The prices clearly tell companies that MS will not tolerate certain behaviors, especially those that favor competitors.

This is not a picture of a company that should be rewarded. It is a clear call for breaking MS into at least two (2) if not three (3) separate companies. A fitting remedy would be three (3) companies: one for the OS; one for applications; and one for hardware.

Any lesser remedy will not only be a miscarriage of justice but a disservice to national security and consumers of an industry whose progress is stymied by the domination of an inferior OS.

Talk to you later.

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